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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the relationship between globalization and higher education by highlighting the changes and challenges that beset institutions of higher learning within the new globalizing economy. There are two overarching conditions that are transforming the structures and practices of higher education: (1) globalization; and (2) the incorporation of new information and communication technologies into the knowledge activities of research, publication, and pedagogy. It contends that through globalization, higher education and knowledge production (the essential purpose of universities) are thwarted as the neo-liberal positivist discourse champions the market-centric approach and higher education becomes embroiled in mass consumption and commodification. The globalization package lends itself to neo-liberal policy measures that assume universal applicability. This closely resembles colonialism and the destructive nature of that Eurocentric paradigm. The paper states that the tenets of globalization when applied to the Caribbean lend themselves to renewed differentiation and fragmentation, while Pan-African ideals, on the other hand, foster unity and solidarity. The paper examines to what extent Caribbean universities within the diaspora can adapt and respond to the globalization of higher education while articulating the tenets of Pan-Africanism. (Contains 15 notes.) (Author/BT)

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GLOBALISATION, HIGHER EDUCATION AND PAN-AFRICANISM: A CRITICAL COMPROMISE

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ABSTRACT

In the main, this paper will discuss the relationship between globalisation and higher education by highlighting the changes and challenges which beset institutions of higher learning within the new globalising economy. An argument is made that there are two overarching conditions which are transforming the structures and practices of higher education namely, globalisation and the incorporation of new information and communication technologies into the knowledge activities of research, publication and pedagogy. Through globalisation, higher education and knowledge production (the essential purpose of universities) are thwarted as the neo-liberal positivist discourse champions the market centric approach and higher education becomes embroiled in mass consumption and commodification. The globalisation package lends itself to neo-liberal policy measures which assume universal applicability and appeal. This closely resembles colonialism and the destructive nature of that Eurocentric paradigm. The tenets of globalisation when applied to the Caribbean lend itself to renewed differentiation and fragmentation. Pan-Africanist ideals on the other hand, fosters unity and solidarity. This paper then seeks to examine to what extent Caribbean universities within the Diaspora can adapt and respond to the globalisation of higher education while articulating the tenets of Pan-Africanism.

INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the relationship between globalisation and higher education. The globalisation of higher education has brought with it, inter-related sets of changes that are having a major influence on higher education now and for the future. Changes are wrought by the incorporation of new information and communication technologies into the teaching activities of colleges and universities. Added to this are the issues of life long learning, web-based delivery, distance education and diverse curricular structures to develop intercultural skills, all packaged

with mass consumption and commodification of knowledge. These major challenges now confronting higher education seem to be propelled by market-mediated forces within the neo-liberal positivist discourse. This shift in the development discourse closely resembles colonialism and neocolonialism. Neo-liberalism then, as it is re-cast as part of the work ethic of globalisation is still representative of much that is Eurocentric, dysfunctional, ahistorical and divisive in nature. Pan-Africanism on the other hand speaks to the need to establish political, economic and cultural unity and freedom from oppression of members of the African Diaspora. The question then becomes what is the role that Pan-Africanist ideals can play within the globalisation of higher education given the apparent contradictions.

CAVEAT

This work serves as a preliminary excursion into the role of Pan-Africanism within the higher education discourse. There certainly exists a wealth of literature on higher education, the globalisation of higher education and Pan-africanism as separate entities. However, the merged areas of Pan-Africanism and its role within the area of higher education was not as readily forthcoming.

This paper therefore takes a narrow and measured look into Pan-Africanism and its relationship to the globalisation of higher education.

GLOBALISATION

Globalisation and its impact on the world at large and more importantly, the Caribbean have been in progress for over 500 years. Globalisation here defined is the burgeoning of an international capitalist world order, which has impacted the world over. Within recent times, it has

become the new "sexy" term, which has both a nebulous and and an ambiguous meaning oft-times in the literature.

In this paper, globalisation will be analysed as the phenomena which some scholars generally agree promotes the transformation of the world into a New World Order and the establishment of a truly global economy. This new global order is argued to be the culmination of a number of independent developments encompassing changing technology, the global movement of neo-liberal ideology, increasing interdependence and heightened competition. These destructive forces are intensifying within the contemporary international political economy. Resulting from this, Marshall (1996)[1] is prepared to argue that the national ethic comes under grave attack and further national development concerns are side-lined, as management of the state becomes embroiled with the business of accommodation and adaptation to the new globalising totality.

GLOBALISATION AND THE CARIBBEAN

In the Caribbean, globalisation has produced much dynamism and conflict. In particular, renewed differentiation, fragmentation and disintegration have been the most glaring result. Girvan (1999)[2], Benn (1998)[3] and Gray (1998)[4] all assert that globalisation has specific characteristics which must be identified whenever any analysis of globalisation is undertaken. Summarily, the principles of global democratic capitalism contain the properties of a world economic order, which centers on the US-EU-Japan triad, with the political and military authority vested in the US. The famous and lately "infamous" World Trade Organisation is dominated by this "triad" and has the responsibility for negotiating, codifying and enforcing neo-liberal practices. By its very nature, global democratic capitalism and its package of neo-liberal policy measures assume universal applicability and appeal. However, it is this oversight which in the main portends the negative impact of globalisation on various Caribbean societies. The desire to

achieve global oneness and completeness as the blueprint for all countries regardless of their history, culture, resources and level of development is another feature of globalisation which cements its Eurocentric, dysfunctional, ahistorical and divisive context.

GLOBALISATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Universities are challenged by globalisation on many fronts. In the areas of curricula, outreach and research, globalisation with its neo-liberal approach adheres to the thinking that global education is a reflection or extension of society's increasing understanding of the market as king and the result is the commodification of knowledge, mass consumption and the managerial approach to the administration of universities. In fact, Field (1995)[5] posits that the changing face of education portends that higher education is increasingly being thought of as a commodity to be shaped according to consumer demand. Concommitant with this, are the burgeoning realities of mass media, the new paradigms of knowledge production and corporate and virtual universities.

The research practices of universities and industry, as well as other knowledge producers, are drawing closer together. All are now in effect, actors in the knowledge business. The fact of globalisation means that for each actor, the bulk of the knowledge to which access is required will have been produced elsewhere. In fact, Gibbons (1998)[6] postulates that over 90% of the knowledge produced globally is not produced where its use is required. The challenge is how to get knowledge that may have been produced anywhere in the world to the place where it can be used effectively in a particular problem-solving context.

Knowledge production has been the main business of universities as opposed to the re-configuring of knowledge that is being produced by globalisation in the distributed knowledge production system. For universities of the developing world, this shift from knowledge production to knowledge configuration is a challenge.

Theories and practices of higher education have become characterised by various debates surrounding the nature of the research university. According to the literature, the impact of globalisation on colleges and universities has a tendency to fall into two distinct camps. On the one hand, universities are seen to be the new leading knowledge factories poised to soar to new heights in a knowledge-based economy and society. On the other hand, the university is viewed as an at risk institution soon likely to lose market share to powerful consortia of research universities and communication corporations.

These challenges to higher education have been brought about due to the demands of the neo-liberal, market-centred approach of globalisation, where education and knowledge has become a commodity to be both bought and sold to the highest bidder.

PAN-AFRICANISM

There remains countless definitions of Pan-Africanism encompassing both traditional and non-traditional analyses. W.E. B. DuBois regards the "Pan-African movement as an aid to the promotion of national self-determination among Africans under African leadership for the benefit of Africans themselves (Padmore 1972)[7]. George Padmore sees it as "the manifestation of fraternal solidarity among Africans and peoples of African descent" (Padmore 1972)[8]. Some scholars like Esedeke (1977)[9] suggests that "Pan Africanism is a political and cultural phenomenon which regards Africa, Africans and their descendants abroad as a unit. Stokely Carmichael/Kwame Toure[10] defines Pan Africanism as the total liberation and unification of Africa under scientific socialism whereas John Henrik Clarke[11] asserts that "Pan–Africanism is about the restoration of African people to their proper place in world history…to facilitate and bring about the ingathering of African people throughout the world and to restore what slavery and colonialism took away" (Clarke 1990; 1994)[12].

PAN-AFRICANISM AND GLOBALISATION

While these definitions serve to highlight the varying perspectives/themes within Pan-Africanism, this work will be focussing primarily to the last of these. Clarke asserts that slavery and colonialism stole from peoples of the African Diaspora and calls for renewal and restoration within Pan-Africanism. Globalisation is colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism revisited and as a result, Pan-Africanism has a place in the fight against global democratic capitalism. The latter-day face of the globalisation agenda replete with neo-liberal, market centric policies can be traced back to mid-nineteenth century England where there existed an experiment in social engineering whose major objective was to free economic life from social and political dominance *by the state* (my emphasis), by constructing a new institution, the free market (Gray 1998)[13]. The free market created a new type of economy in which prices of all goods, including labour, changed without regard to their effects on society. The result was social anarchy. The rupture in England's economic and social existence has been called the Great Transformation (Gray 1998)[14].

In a similar vein, the impact of globalisation on higher education and the attendant challenges which have been wrought by it, such as mass consumption and commodification of knowledge can so too, be seen as a great transformation. During the last twenty years, a new paradigm of the function of higher education in society has gradually emerged. The critical function of universities has been displaced in favour of a more pragmatic role in terms of the provision of qualified manpower and the production of knowledge. These changes are intended to have direct practical impact on the behaviour and functioning of higher education institutions (Gibbons 1998)[15]. The new paradigm is bringing in its train a new culture of accountability as is evidenced by the spread of managerialism and an ethos of value for money throughout higher education systems internationally. This is the reality of the globalisation of higher education.

PAN-AFRICANISM AND THE GLOBALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The essential nature of Pan-Africanism is such that the historical struggle of African people has been bound up with the ravages of colonialism and its many variants. Latter-day neo-colonialism, that is, globalisation, is producing a similar trend. The globalisation of higher education embraces a Eurocentric, market-led approach to education, a mechanism of social change which has traditionally been a source of upward advancement and an avenue for social mobility for peoples of African origin. In that regard, Pan-Africanism which has as its basic premise a commitment to bringing about effective action for the liberation and progress of the African peoples and nations, definitely has a place within the discourse of the globalisation of higher education.

The peoples of the African Diaspora can ill afford to allow Eurocentricity to rear its malevolent head in the education of its generations. While at the primary and secondary levels, students in the Caribbean schools are exposed to an Afrocentric approach to the study of history and geography, the tertiary level tends to isolate those who choose not to "take" those core courses. In fact, institutions of higher learning in the Caribbean have borrowed their traditions from the Western tradition of learning. The globalisation of higher education further heightens this practice with its accent on re-shaping the curricular structure in particular. For example, here at UWI with the move to semesterisation in the early nineties, students are being cheated out of an extensive appreciation of a basic knowledge base.

A similar situation occurs with the outreach package offered through distance education. Globalisation of higher education has created the dual mode system, that is, the face-to-face and distance mode, where, instead of the distance education deeply enriching the learning experience and creating another source for educational advancement and development for peoples of African

Diaspora, the distance mode at UWI finds itself constantly competing with the face-to-face mode for legitimacy and respect.

With regard to research, globalisation tends to taylor academic autonomy with regard to the research agenda into a neoliberal thrust. Some researchers then, tend to lose their intellectual freedom to pursue areas of study that are counter to the neo-liberal ethic of globalisation.

CONCLUSION

In sum, globalisation evokes a universal totalizing force where even local or national higher education systems must conform to international change regardless of the specific social readiness of these "sovereign states" to adapt to these new realities. As in mid-nineteenth century England, where social anarchy reigned with the introduction of the "free market" rubric so too will this free market concept when applied to higher education reek social havoc. Many Caribbean societies are slow to respond to globalisation in some of its manifestations. It therefore becomes even further difficult for higher education in the Caribbean to adapt and respond to the features of free market higher education namely, mass consumption, commodification of knowledge, accountability and managerialism. The desire of globalisation to achieve global one-ness and universality regardless of a country's history, resources and level of development prohibit effective change. While new technologies are initiated, absorbed and adapted, the result is not a universal free market but an anarchy of sovereign states, rival capitalism's and stateless zones. The question then becomes how does the Caribbean diaspora of Africans respond to neo-colonialism via the globalisation of higher education

Let's face it, the majority of academics and students in Caribbean universities make up a large percentage of African peoples. Pan-Africanism then as Clarke posits is the mechanism for the facilitation and ingathering of African people throughout the world, *with the express purpose*

(my emphasis), to restore what slavery and colonialism took away. Following from that Pan-Africanist intellectuals in the education business, have the honourable responsibility to re-shape and impact the lives of this new generation of intellectuals within the African Diaspora. If the globalisation of higher education is affecting key and crucial areas like curricula, outreach and research, then time is at hand. The Caribbean arm of the Pan-African movement needs to strategise plans and policies to shirk off the sometimes dangerous tendencies of the globalisation of higher education.

END NOTES

1. For highlights of this argument, see Don. D. Marshall, "National Development and the Globalisation Discourse: Confronting "imperative" and "convergence" notions in Third World Quarterly, Vol.17, No.5, 1996.
2. See N. Girvan "Globalisation, Fragmentation and Integration: A Caribbean Perspective". Paper prepared for International Meeting on Globalisation and Development Problems. Havana, Cuba, January 18-22, 1999.
3. See D.M. Benn. "Globalisation and the North-South Divide: Power Asymmetrics in Contemporary International Economic Relations." Paper presented for Conference on the Politics of Globalisation, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 6-7 November, 1998.
4. See J. Gray. False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism: Granada Publications, London, 1998.
5. For further discussion, see J. Field "Globalisation, Consumption and the Learning Business", Distance Education Vol.16, No.2. 1995.

6. A complete analysis is given in M. Gibbons. Higher Education Relevance in the 21st Century. Paper prepared for the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, Paris, France, October 5-9, 1998.
7. For a deeper analysis, see G. Padmore. Pan-Africanism or Communism: The coming struggle for Africa. New York: Anchor, 1972.
8. See G. Padmore, "Pan-Africanism or communism…"
9. For more elaboration, see P.O. Esedeke. New Pan-African trends. Africa, 73, 67-68, 1977.
10. This argument is fully developed in K. Toure. Address to the Sixth Pan-African Congress. Black Scholar, 4(10), 22-26, 1974.
11. For a complete discussion, see J.H. Clarke. Pan-Africanism: A brief history of an idea in the African world. Third World First, 1(2), 9-28, 1990.
12. See for further clarification. J.H. Clarke. Who Betrayed the African World Revolution and other speeches. Kent, OH: Institute for African-American Affairs, 1994.
13. See J. Gray. False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism: Granada Publications, London, 1998.
14. See J. Gray "False Dawn…"
15. See M. Gibbons. Higher Education Relevance in the 21st Century. Paper prepared for the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, Paris, France, October 5-9, 1998.

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